

# **ALAMEDA GOLF COMMISSION MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**

**Wednesday, January 19, 2011**

## **1 CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Jane Sullwold called the regular meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. at the Chuck Corica Golf Complex, Ladies Lounge, 1 Clubhouse Memorial Road, Alameda, CA 94502

### **1-A ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Chair Jane Sullwold, Commissioner Ray Gaul, Commissioner Bill Schmitz, Commissioner Betsy Gammell, and Commissioner Jeff Wood

**Absent:** None

**Staff:** None

**Also Present:** None

### **1-B APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Minutes of December 15, 2010 were approved unanimously

### **1-C ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

The Commission unanimously adopted the agenda.

## **2 ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

## **3 COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS**

Chair Sullwold: "I will just state, as I think I did earlier, again Dale Lillard attempted to disrupt our process for preparing the draft minutes for submission to the Commission for approval. Again, I was able to convince Lisa Goldman, the Acting City Manager, that our process was perfectly legal and we should be able to follow it and she conceded to that. On the other hand, our parking spaces were summarily removed without any notice, even though they've been in existence, I've been informed by Lil Arnerich, since the 1950's. In addition, as Bill noted, there is no representative here from Kemper nor is there anyone here from the City. I sent an email to Lisa Goldman asking her how we were expected to fulfill the specific duties that were outlined in the Municipal Code Section setting up the Golf Commission, which allows the Golf Commission or gave the Golf Commission the power to seek reports from the General Manager of the Golf Complex. And since, of course, we

cannot receive reports other than in a public meeting pursuant to the Brown Act, I asked her how it is we are expected to fulfill our duties. And her response was, 'you will get written reports from John Vest and Matt Wisely regarding the operations and the maintenance activities at the Golf Complex, and in your meeting you can ask questions on the record as to what follow up questions you might have about those items. John and Matt will listen to the tape and will then respond in writing to any questions that we raise at the meeting itself.' And that cumbersome procedure is now, according to the City Manager, the procedure that we are to follow from now on. I am totally offended, I am appalled at this attempt to marginalize the Golf Commission, but I'm damned if I'm going to resign, which is what I think this is all designed to do. So I hope the rest of you are listening. We're not resigning." Commissioner Gaul: "I considered it, but I changed my mind. It only has to do with the way the City Council is behaving."

#### **4 WRITTEN/ORAL REPORTS**

##### **4-A Golf Complex Maintenance activities report by Matt Wisely**

Written report was submitted by Matt Wisely (attached).

##### **4-B Golf Shop and Driving Range activities report by John Vest**

Written report was submitted by John Vest (attached).

Chair Sullwold: "I noticed that there was little discussion, if any -- in fact, none -- about the results of operations in terms of rounds played and revenues generated in the month of December or any explanation as to how that month compared to the previous month or to the month last year. I found that to be a pretty substantial absence from that report. Does anybody else have any other questions? I suspect that we're going to have to get used to this format and dig into it to see whether we really do have any questions." Commissioner Schmitz: "In the future, in this format, where we don't have a representative here, I think we really should have a list of about 100 or so questions that they can respond to in a written, if they want to do this by paper, then we can do that. Even at the meetings, there's a lot of questions come up, so if they want to spend, you know, 20 hours a week answering questions from the public and from the Golf Commission in writing, then, if that's the format they choose, we can do that." Chair Sullwold: "I'm actually somewhat at a loss about why this even came about. I know that the meeting that we had last January, which was the meeting after the Mif Albright surprise recommendation by the City Manager when we were all so taken aback by the fact that the numbers purportedly showed a huge loss on the Mif Albright course, when in fact, John had been telling us all along that everything was on target -- and that January meeting, John was not there and Matt was the only one here, and we confronted him with a lot of questions, and perhaps made him uncomfortable. I am not aware of any meeting since then where anyone from Kemper has been made uncomfortable. Am I missing something? Does anybody think that we've, I'm not even talking about. . . ."

Commissioner Schmitz: "I think we can, I mean I have my opinion on these things, and it's certainly my opinion, and until we get a representative from the City to explain this to us, then it's all speculation on our part. I think this is a City condition. The structure is that there's a representative under Park and Rec, that the Park and Rec Direction be should be here or his designee, we would prefer that it would be somebody that's a hands on in charge of the Golf Course, a Golf Pro or Golf Manager, whether it be Kemper or whoever it may be, that's what we'd prefer to have. In their absence, if they've made that policy decision for whatever reason that Kemper's not going to be here, then the City has a responsibility to have a member of their staff here so we can accept these things. If we're going to do all of this in paper, then it's going to be a very labor intensive, I don't know that exactly where and with the new Administration in the City, if they were part of this policy change or not, but I would like to hear their side. I think that's a reasonable request. I guess at this point, we're going to have to put that in writing. I would just like to have somebody here." Commissioner Gammell: "I think a lot of questions we've had have been cleared up at the meetings." Commissioner Gaul: "Why don't we make a motion?"

Commissioner Schmitz: "My motion would be to request to the City that we have a representative from the City, or preferably a Golf Manager here, it's their prerogative, I guess, if they don't want to have a Golf Manager, if they want to send someone from Park and Rec here, somebody with reasonable knowledge of what we're doing, so that's my motion." Commissioner Gaul: "I second."

Chair Sullwold: "Any further discussion? Ok, it's been moved and seconded that we make a formal written request to the City that we have a representative here, preferably from golf management, but, if not from golf management, then from the City's Park and Rec Dept, or Rec and Park Dept to participate in our Golf Commission meetings on a regular basis." Commissioner Schmitz: "Which is what they do with every other commission in the City. They have somebody from the City staff." The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Sullwold: "Ok, do you want me to write a letter to the City Manager and copy the Council?" [Unanimous assent.]

Chair Sullwold: "Ok, anything else on John Vest's report?" Commissioner Gammell: "I just wanted to say that on Sales and Marketing, I did talk to him, which I will do before we have a meeting, and that the particularly good thing that's happened is this 10 cart play pass, and he's very happy with the results of that." Chair Sullwold: "So that gives 10 rounds with carts for \$280 for residents and \$320 for non-residents." Commissioner Gammell: "Right, and \$100 for seniors and \$130 for non-resident seniors. And he said they're using carts when they don't have to so they're using the card up faster."

#### **4-C Beautification Program and Junior Golf Club by Mrs. Norma Arnerich**

None. Mrs. Arnerich is recovering from surgery, and the Golf Commissioners sent her their best wishes for a speedy recovery.

#### **4-D Golf Complex Restaurant Report, Jim's on the Course**

Written report was submitted by Jim's on the Course (attached).

### **5 AGENDA ITEMS**

#### **5-A Status Report on Long Term Lease and Mif Albright Negotiations including Golf Commission recommendations**

Commissioner Gammell: "First of all, I knew there was a meeting of the non-profit group, mainly Jane and Joe, met with some of the Junior Board members, and since Norma wasn't able, our Vice President Bill Wehr was there, and they met about, well, I wasn't there, but I have knowledge of what they met about. Dale Lillard called me today to ask me what was happening with the Mif, did the Junior Board say forget it, I said, no, absolutely not as far as the non-profit went. And, so, he asked me questions, so I told him the same thing. He hadn't heard from Joe or Jane. I said I'm sure you'll hear from them and that he should call Bill Wehr. He said that's a good idea, he'd do that. So, I said, are we still having the special meeting on January 25<sup>th</sup>, and he said, yes, but there'll be a closed session first, and then the meeting. And I said, I hope it's not really late, because I'm going on vacation. And he said, well he'd hope not, too, because he was paying for them to come from Chicago. And, I thought yeah, that's out of our golf fund. So Kemper is coming and they will discuss the different options and then the City Council will take it under advisement and we'll go from there." Tim Scates: "So, for my understanding, is Kemper going to present options or the one they prefer?" Commissioner Gammell: "I would assume the one they prefer, maybe, they might say we'll do this or this, and then the City Council will make a decision. And he did mention the 27 holes was definitely one of the options."

Commissioner Schmitz: "So, we should get that report the Thursday before." Chair Sullwold: "Not necessarily, because it's a special meeting, and special meetings require only 24 hours notice under the Brown Act, so, if possible, although the Sunshine Task Force recommended that all special meetings also be given 72 hours notice. That was one of their central recommendations when they concluded their work. So, it's not clear when it will be on the agenda."

Commissioner Schmitz: "Well, that will be our first clue as to what will be proposed Tuesday night will be the written report. It may not be that specific, it could be very vague. It could include a draft contract attached to it, but it could not also. But, that will be our first indication of what's being proposed. We should be able to get that before the meeting, ideally we could get that tomorrow." Chair Sullwold: "Since it's an outside entity and not a City staff recommendation, it's possible that it will simply

say, 'Hear from Kemper as to its ideas about the Chuck Corica Golf Complex,' and there will be no report. It's very possible. It may be, that they're not City staff, they're not obligated to submit an advance copy of their report. So, it may be that what we get an agenda item that says 'Listen to a report from KemperSports regarding its ideas and concepts for the Chuck Corica Golf Complex,' and nothing more. That's what Bob predicts -- that we won't get anything at all before the meeting, that we'll have to go there and be surprised. I think we need to, obviously, gather the troops. I hesitated to do it too early, you don't want to let people too early because they lose their focus. Is there any way you can change the Men's Club meeting?" Commissioner Schmitz: "I don't know that it's necessary to change the meeting. I think we need to rally the troops once again, including Junior Golf, including Alameda High, including the Men's Club, including the Commuters. I think we need to fill the Council chambers." Chair Sullwold: "We need to show that we care about what happens with this Golf Complex. We can't lose our momentum. I know we've done it about eight times, and it's very frustrating that nothing happens and I think they're trying to wear us down."

Commissioner Schmitz: "The message has been clear by all the stakeholders at this golf course that they want 36 holes and they want the Mif Albright course. I think, once again, that we need to line up the speakers and say that."

Chair Sullwold: "I have an email list consisting of all the people who've pledged support for the Mif Albright, and I will be sending out an email, hopefully tonight, to them as well as all the women in the Women's Golf Club, and mentioning it tomorrow in the general meeting of the Women's Golf Club. It's important to get a lot of people there and be willing to put in a speaker slip even if all you do is stand and say I believe two 18 hole courses and the Mif Albright Par 3 where it is. We need lots of people. I think that they don't listen to me anymore is the problem." Commissioner Gammell: "I think I'll get up and say, 'How can you possibly lose park land.'"

Commissioner Schmitz: "It's cumulative. I think who makes the impact is when the Alameda High Girls team gets up in their jackets. It's hard for Council members, and you've got some new ones there, they look out there and everybody out there has a unified message."

Unknown asked: "Does anyone know his [Councilmember Bonta's] position on any of this?" Chair Sullwold: "He had a meeting with Joe, Tony and me after the election, but before he took office, and it lasted a couple of hours, and we presented him with a lot of material. He didn't express any positions, but he was very up to speed already, asked some really good questions, asked for some more information, which we forwarded to him after the meeting."

Commissioner Schmitz: "I think, unfortunately, I know we've done this time and time again, but I think we have to do this again. I think that the Mayor at the last Council meeting that Jane and I were at, she did express frustration that this has not been resolved and let's get this done. She directed the City Manager to move forward on

this so we can have a meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Whatever is going to happen, I think, they maybe do it in front of the golf community.” Chair Sullwold: “They darn well better present their piece before the public comments start, because if they ask for public comment before they even, I mean, that’s one of my frustrations, they have public comment, they close public comment, then they start discussing things and get things wrong and there’s no opportunity as we saw December 7<sup>th</sup> for anybody to correct them, because they won’t listen to anybody who wants to correct them. I actually expressed my views to Marie Gilmore that night saying that there’s something dreadfully wrong with the process whereby you can’t get input into issues once you start discussing them from the people that elected you. But, certainly, I’m hoping at least Kemper will give its presentation, there’ll be some preliminary discussion from the Council and then they’ll open it for public comment. But, I think we need to get everybody up there to say, if they’re thinking 27 holes is the great solution for the golf complex, we’ve got to get people to say that’s just ridiculous. We have a Par 3. We have a charitable foundation that’s willing to put out more than half the cost of improving the Par 3 to the point that it’s going to be a really nice little course. Why do we need to spend \$1,000,000 of our money to build a new Par 3, and ruin, in the process, nine holes of one of our regulation courses. That’s a message. The only way you do 27 holes and a new Par 3 is if the Mif is gone and I think the message has come clear that everybody wants the Mif, but I also think certain people on the Council think if we give you another Par 3, then we solved all your problems. And I don’t think there’s been enough before them saying forget it, we need both of our 18 hole courses.”

Commissioner Gammell: “We’ve talked a lot about that, Jane, about needing the Commuters, the Junior Golf, they’ve heard that. I’ve talked about it.” Chair Sullwold: “And the point that you said you’re going to make, Betsy, is: to do something that closes the Mif and gives it to developers is betraying the representations that we made to the Alameda Court system when we acquired this property in the 40’s in the first place. We told them we needed it for public park lands. And that was the premise under which we got it. To give it to a developer is just a betrayal. Unfortunately, Terri Highsmith is the one that gave the legal advice that it requires an open meeting and a vote of four of five of the Council members to do that. Maybe they’ll find a new City Attorney who’ll have a different interpretation of that.”

## **5-B Update on Golf Complex Finances**

Chair Sullwold: “As you can see, we don’t have our usual financial director here. Bob is in trial and did not have the opportunity to evaluate all the information that was contained in the packet. Suffice it to say, that the little report that is included from John Vest and the City says a lot of it. The interesting thing to me is, it’s astonishing to me that the rounds keep going down month after month.”

Commissioner Schmitz: “We had pretty bad weather, it’s been cold, and that affects the golf this time of year.” Chair Sullwold: “But the problem is that we’ve had bad weather in other Decembers, too. What’s different now?”

Commissioner Schmitz: “We had really bad weather this December, and generally it’s in January, and that affects the golf this time of year.” Chair Sullwold: “Unfortunately, we are draining money from the Enterprise Fund, another \$100,000. But, even before the City’s takeaway, there was a net operating loss for December.”

**6. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS, NON-AGENDA (Public Comment)**

None

**7. OLD BUSINESS**

None

**8. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

Included in the Commission packet was a memorandum to the Finance Department showing a surcharge payment for December 2010 of \$3,955. The year-to-date total to the General Fund is \$52,813 for FY 2010/2011.

**9. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING’S AGENDA**

- Status Report on Long Term Lease and Mif Albright Negotiations including Golf Commission recommendations, if any
- Update on Golf Complex Finances

**10. ANNOUNCEMENTS/ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

The agenda for the meeting was posted 72 hours in advance in accordance with the Brown Act.